

VAGINITIS (MONILIA YEAST INFECTION)

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

DESCRIPTION

Infection or inflammation of the vagina caused by a yeast-like fungus (*Monilia* or *Candida albicans*). Monilia vaginitis tends to appear before menstrual periods and improves as soon as the period begins.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Severity of the following symptoms varies between women and from time to time in the same woman:

- White, "curdy" vaginal discharge, (resembles lumps of cottage cheese).
- The odor may be unpleasant, but not foul. Swollen, red, tender, itching vaginal lips (labia) and surrounding skin.
- Burning on urination.
- Change in vaginal color from pale pink to red.
- Pain during sexual intercourse

CAUSES

Monilia (or *Candida*) live in small numbers in a healthy vagina, intestines, and mouth. When the vagina's hormone and pH balance is disturbed, the organisms multiply and cause infections.

RISK INCREASES WITH

Factors that may disturb the vagina's pH balance

- Pregnancy.
- Diabetes mellitus.
- Antibiotic treatment.
- Oral contraceptives.
- High carbohydrate intake, especially sugars and alcohol.
- Hot weather or non-ventilating clothing, which increase moisture, warmth and darkness, fostering fungal growth.
- Immunosuppression from drugs or disease.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Keep the genital area clean. Use plain unscented soap. Take showers rather than tub baths. Wear cotton underpants or panty hose with a cotton crotch. Don't sit around in wet clothing, especially a wet bathing suit. Avoid douches, vaginal deodorants and bubble baths. Limit your intake of sweets and alcohol. After urination or bowel movements, cleanse by wiping

or washing from the front to back (vagina to anus). Avoid broad-spectrum antibiotics unless absolutely necessary.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Symptoms will clear up with treatment.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

It may cause soreness, itching, and irritation.

GENERAL MEASURES

Diagnostic tests may include laboratory studies of vaginal discharge and pelvic examination. Drug therapy will be directed to the specific organism. Your sexual partner may need treatment also. It is best not to do self-treatment for the disorder until the specific cause is determined. Don't douche. If urinating causes burning, urinate through a tubular device, such as a toilet-paper roll or plastic cup with the end cut out or pour a cup of warm water over genital area while you urinate.

MEDICATION

You may be prescribed antifungal drugs, either as vaginal creams or suppositories or in oral form. If your period occurs during treatment, continue the medication through your treatment. Follow the directions carefully. Non-prescription treatments available over the counter are effective.

ACTIVITY & DIET

Avoid overexertion, heat and excessive sweating. Delay sexual relations until symptoms clear up. Eating yogurt and a low sugar diet can help prevent or treat yeast infection.

NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF..

- Despite treatment, symptoms worsen or persist longer than one week.
- Unusual vaginal bleeding or swelling develops.
- Frequent reoccurrence of symptoms.

Student Health Center

WWW.SIU.EDU/~SHC

This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.



618-453-3311

Dial-A-Nurse is available after-hours until 10:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. In case of emergency dial 911.